

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated March 11, 2009. Claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 13 to 15, 17, 18 and 22 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 18 and 22 are in independent form. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 18 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,182,069 (Niblack) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,608,862 (Enokida), Claims 13 to 15 were rejected under § 103(a) over Niblack in view of Enokida and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,612,715 (Karaki), and Claim 17 was rejected under § 103(a) over Niblack in view of Enokida and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,356,908 (Brown). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The claims herein generally concern the use of an image search apparatus to search for images. A plurality of images is stored. Partial images included in the respective stored images are stored in correspondence with the respective stored images. Features of the stored partial images are stored in correspondence with the respective stored partial images. A feature to be used as a search query is received. An image including a partial image which contains a feature corresponding to the search query is searched for. A searched image is displayed, the partial image corresponding to the search query in the searched image is enlarged, and the enlarged partial image is composed onto the displayed searched image.

By virtue of enlarging the partial image corresponding to the search condition, the partial image is emphasized for the user, who is therefore able to grasp it more readily.

Applicant submits that the applied references, alone or in any permissible combination, are not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the notion of enlarging a partial image that corresponds to a search query, and composing the enlarged partial image onto a displayed searched image.

More particularly, the applied references, alone or in any permissible combination, are not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of receiving a feature as a search query, searching for an image including a partial image which contains a feature corresponding to the search query, displaying the searched image, enlarging the partial image corresponding to the search query in the searched image, and composing the enlarged partial image onto the displayed searched image.

Niblack is seen to disclose displaying an image corresponding to a search query. However, Niblack is believed to be silent on enlarging a partial image that corresponds to a search query, and composing the enlarged partial image onto a displayed searched image.

Indeed, page 3 of the Office Action concedes that Niblack “does not expressly recite search result display means for displaying candidate image, enlarging the partial image corresponding to the search condition, and superimposing the enlarged partial image, of the candidate image, on to the displayed candidate image”. However, the Office Action alleges that Enokida discloses the claimed “display means”. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Enokida discloses enlarging a user designated area of a displayed image. In particular, a user designates enlargement (display of an image having a higher resolution) of a rectangular area 42 of a displayed image 41, using a keyboard or mouse. See Enokida,

Fig. 4, and column 4, lines 36 to 39. The position and size of the rectangular area 42, which has been designated by the user, is calculated. If the resolution of the displayed image 41 is not the maximum resolution, the addresses of the position and the size of the image data having a higher resolution are obtained, based on the calculated position and size of the rectangular area 42. See Enokida, column 6, lines 40 to 60. When processing ends, the rectangular area 42 is displayed as a rectangular area 43 having a higher resolution, as indicated at images 41 and 44 of Fig. 4. See Enokida, column 6, lines 8 to 11.

Thus, Enokida discloses enlargement of a user-designated area of a displayed image, wherein the user designates the area using a keyboard or mouse. This is different from the claims, which define enlargement of a partial image that corresponds to a search query.

Page 3 of the Office Action takes the position that Enokida discloses enlargement of a partial image corresponding to the search condition:

“Enokida discloses search result display means for displaying candidate image, enlarging the partial image corresponding to the search condition at (Fig 4 where the image corresponding to the search condition element 42 is enlarged as seen in the below image 44, Col 6 line 44)”

As indicated above, Applicant believes that this is a misinterpretation of the actual disclosure of Enokida. Enokida is not seen to disclose enlargement based on a search condition, but rather is seen to disclose enlargement based on user designation. This point is underscored in Enokida at column 4:

“An example will now be described in which the user designates enlargement (display of an image having a higher resolution) of a rectangular area 42 in FIG. 4 using a keyboard or mouse, not shown.”

On the other hand, the claims herein define enlargement of a partial image that corresponds to a search query. In particular, a feature to be used as a search query is received. An image including a partial image which contains a feature corresponding to the search query is searched for, and a searched image containing the partial image is displayed. The partial image is enlarged and composed onto the displayed searched image. Thus, the image to be enlarged is a partial image that contains a feature corresponding to the search query.

In contrast, Enokida discloses enlargement of a user-designated area of a displayed image, wherein the user designates the area using a keyboard or mouse. Enokida is believed to be silent on enlargement of a partial image that contains a feature corresponding to a search query.

Karaki and Brown have been studied, but they are not seen to teach anything that, when combined with Niblack and Enokida, would overcome the deficiencies of Niblack and Enokida as described above.

Therefore, the applied references, alone or in any permissible combination, are not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the notion of enlarging a partial image that corresponds to a search query, and composing the enlarged partial image onto a displayed searched image.

More particularly, the applied references, alone or in any permissible combination, are not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of receiving a feature as a search query, searching for an image including a partial image which contains a feature corresponding to the search query, displaying the searched image, enlarging the

partial image corresponding to the search query in the searched image, and composing the enlarged partial image onto the displayed searched image.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, independent Claims 1, 18 and 22, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to recite subject matter that would not have been obvious from the applied art, and are therefore believed to be in condition for allowance.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

CONCLUSION

No claim fees are believed due. However, should it be determined that additional claim fees are required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 or 1.17, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 06-1205.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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